

Equalities and health and safety

Health and safety at work is an issue for everyone regardless of who they are and where they work. UNISON takes your health and safety seriously which is why we have over 5,000 safety reps across the UK. Their job is to support and advise members on all aspects of health and safety in the workplace.

We always need more safety reps and we are especially keen to recruit reps who can bring a different perspective to our health and safety work.

Members who organise as part of our self-organised groups (LGBT, Black members, disabled members, retired members, young members and women) have experience and knowledge that can really help to inform our health and safety work and we are keen to recruit more safety reps from these groups.

Have you thought about becoming a safety rep??

You can use your skills, experience and knowledge around equality issues to help support UNISON members in your workplace by becoming a health and safety rep.

We will give you all the training you need to be effective and get the job done, but your unique perspective will help you bring something extra to the role. And that's very important for UNISON members who may be experiencing difficulties at work because they are being bullied or harassed, or because employers are using health and safety as an excuse to reinforce discrimination.

What's it like to be a health and safety rep?

Being a health and safety (H&S) rep enables you to play a key role in helping members at work. The law gives you specific rights and a role, but you have no legal duties or responsibilities beyond that of any other employee.

Safety reps:

- consult with and represent members,
- are consulted by and may discuss issues with employers,
- carry out inspections and investigations,
- get time and other facilities during work time both for their role and to get trained,
- can play an important role in getting other members active or signing up new members.

UNISON has a large network of safety reps who can help support and develop each other, but it is

not an onerous role. How much you choose to do is up to you, and it may even help you develop new skills. And being a member of a self-organised group may give you the confidence and knowledge to tackle issues from a different perspective.

If you are interested and want to find out more about becoming a safety rep – speak to someone in your branch – like your Branch H&S Officer or Branch Secretary or contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857.

unison.org.uk/healthandsafety

UNISON – taking your health and safety seriously